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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Miniard Culpepper, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Dorchester, MA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our God and our Lord, our help from ages past and our help for the years to come, we thank You, Lord, for this day, for this is a day that You have made. Let us be glad and delight in it.

We thank You, Lord, for watching over our Senators all night long and waking them up clothed in their right mind. We pray, Lord, that You would bless them this day. Let them be the voice for all that is good and just. Let them be the voice of all that is peaceful and prosperous, loving and lifting.

Bless the Senators, Lord, as they deliberate, that they would be mindful of the homeless and the hungry, the rich and the poor, the helpful, the hopeful, and the hopeless.

Lord, we realize and acknowledge that You are a God of our weary years, that You are a God of our silent tears. Lord, You are the one who brought us thus far on the way. Lord, Thou are this God who has by thy might led us into the light. Lord, we pray, God, that You would keep us forever in the path, we pray.

These and all other prayers we ask in Your Name. Amen and amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 9, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. I yield to the Senator from Massachusetts, Ms. WARREN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Ms. WARREN. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, a warm thank-you to the Reverend Miniard Culpepper. His words of faith and community are greatly appreciated here today.

For a long time now, Reverend Culpepper has been praying over me. Last winter, before I was sworn into office, Reverend Culpepper held a special Sunday prayer service for me in his church, Pleasant Hill Baptist, in Dorchester. That December evening the pews were packed with local preachers and churchgoers representing a dozen or so churches in the area.

At the conclusion of the service, the ministers circled around me, wrapped their arms together and prayed to God to give me the strength to work for the poor and powerless among us.

I feel blessed to have received their prayers, and I have tried my best to keep them in my heart in my work here. But I am just one of many who appreciates the hard work Reverend Culpepper and Pleasant Hill Baptist have put into strengthening and protecting their community.

You see, Reverend Culpepper and his congregation understand that their community extends well beyond the walls of their church. When Jahmol Norfleet, a former gang leader from Roxbury, left prison and showed a desire to turn his life around as a peacemaker between rival gangs, it was Reverend Culpepper who reached out to him. Pleasant Hill Baptist welcomed him into their family. After Jahmol was tragically shot to death outside of his grandmother's home, Reverend Culpepper worked hard to implement antiviolence program methods that were based on his conversations with Jahmol.

When in January of this year 13-year-old Gabriel Clarke suffered grievous gunshot wounds just blocks from Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Reverend Culpepper and his congregation resolved to start their annual neighborhood patrols just a little earlier. After all, as Reverend Culpepper remarked, this is not somebody's problem down the street or on the other side of town, this is my problem.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church was founded more than 70 years ago by Reverend Culpepper's grandfather, Rev. Samuel H. Bullock. Reverend Bullock was deeply involved in his community working to educate children and to reduce juvenile delinquency. Reverend Culpepper and the congregation at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church have carried on that legacy of community involvement with spirit and determination.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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